

# IMMEDIATE INVESTMENTS ON THE ROAD TO REFORM

Health reform can't happen overnight. It will take several years to implement reforms and establish building blocks needed for the Health Exchange. That said, there are steps that can be taken right away to improve and preserve people's access to quality, affordable health care. The Affordable Health Care for America Act includes many provisions that go into effect quickly to help people until reform is fully realized.

## KEEPING AMERICA HEALTHY: IMMEDIATE STEPS TO PROMOTE WELLNESS AND PREVENTION

- **Indian Health.** Modernizes the Indian health care delivery system by reauthorizing the Indian Health Care Improvement Act.
- **Community Health Centers.** Increases funding for CHCs that would allow for a doubling of the number of patients seen by the centers, effective upon enactment.
- **Prevention.** Eliminates cost sharing for additional preventive benefits in Medicare in 2010 and requires State Medicaid programs to cover recommended preventive services without cost-sharing. Establishes upon enactment state grant program to provide prevention and wellness services to communities, with a special emphasis on targeting health disparities.
- **Workforce Improvements.** Provides immediate new and increased investments in training programs designed to increase the number of primary care physicians, nurses, and public health professionals.
- **Public Health Infrastructure.** Provides new investments in state, local, and tribal health departments to build their capacity to address public health epidemics such as tobacco use and obesity, and to prepare for public health emergencies such as the H1N1 flu epidemic or breakouts of food-borne diseases.
- **Employer Wellness Programs.** Establishes a grant program for employers to promote healthy behaviors among their employees.

## EXPANDING COVERAGE: HELP FOR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

- **Immediate Help for the Uninsured (Interim High-Risk Pool).** Creates \$5 billion fund, modeled after the President's plan, to finance an immediate, temporary insurance program for those who are uninsurable because of pre-existing conditions.

- **Continuity for Displaced Workers (COBRA extension).** Allows individuals to keep their COBRA coverage until the exchange is up and running and they have access to affordable coverage. *[NOTE: This is separate from the Recovery Act provisions that provide premium assistance for selected groups.]*
- **New Long-Term Care Program (CLASS Act).** Creates a new, voluntary, public long-term care insurance program to help purchase services and supports for people who have functional limitations. Benefits are a daily or weekly cash benefit to help people with functional limitations purchase the services and supports needed to maintain personal and financial independence.